

*"Holy Mother Earth, the trees and all nature,
are witnesses of your thoughts and deeds."*

A Winnebago Wise Saying



Project members may be contacted at the central office.

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NATIVE STUDIES



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POLARPAM



THE PROJECT

The Edmonton Separate School Board has broadened and intensified its Native Studies Program for the next three years. The project is jointly funded by the School Board and the Department of Indian Affairs.

The decision is based on the premise that native people have long been disadvantaged within the urban school systems and should receive added encouragement to share and make known their total experience.

The project will attempt to discover and implement a variety of approaches designed to make native values, culture and history a more viable and visible aspect of our school programs. These approaches should help native children and adults feel that education concerns itself with their needs and aspirations rather than only those of the white man.



OBJECTIVES

The project will address itself broadly to pupil, parent and teacher needs. Accordingly, project members are always available to parent, teachers and student groups to discuss problems and strategies. The project members will also actively develop and maintain contact with native individuals and organizations.

ACTIVITIES

Some of the activities presently underway include: First, a Native Culture program which involves a team of two native consultants travelling on request to various schools. They spend as much as two weeks working with classes in a particular school. Although they teach native crafts as a base, they are most of all concerned with establishing a dialogue about any aspect of Indian life which may interest the students and staff.



As a second component, there are native teacher aides and native language teachers in some schools with a high native enrolment.

A third direction is the promotion of curriculum enrichment in key subject areas. The major thrust will likely be in the Social Studies program, but possibilities exist as well in the fields of Language Arts, Science, Practical Arts, Religion and Outdoor Education. Initially, the approach in this third area will be to find existing modules on native studies and pilot them in some of our classrooms. Later,

the system may develop more units similar to the existing one on native religions. The project also promotes the acquisition of materials for placement in our teacher resource centre.

A fourth area includes promotion of teacher and pupil exchanges, inservice sessions and seminars to help teachers better understand the concerns of native children in urban schools.

A fifth area includes the sponsorship of research activities between one of our schools and the Faculty of Education.

Additionally, the program provides for exchange of subject specialists from the Edmonton Separate School Board to work with the Federal Schools in the Edmonton area. Students and teachers in both systems should reap mutual benefits from such a dialogue.



DESIRED OUTCOME

The main hope of the project is that all students will emerge with a better understanding and appreciation of native peoples - our first Canadians - and that the native children themselves, will feel more vitally part of the educational process and indeed of Canadian society.